

## TDM Success Story:

### Kitsap Transit's Worker-Driver Bus Program Offers "Buspool" Convenience

*Started in 1967, Kitsap County's Worker-Driver Bus Program has captured a unique market of concentrated military employment sites and offers flexible, customer-responsive "buspool" service. The program's drivers work at the buses' destinations and collaborate with riders on route and pick-up details. The program has been so popular that some riders have been participating for ten to twenty years.*

#### Background

- ◆ Kitsap Transit's Worker-Driver Bus Program was initiated in response to high employment levels at the military installations in Kitsap County, which caused development of outlying areas of the Kitsap Peninsula and a unique demand for transportation to concentrated worksites. The number of routes has always fluctuated along with changes in military staffing.
- ◆ Drivers work at the buses' destinations and are also professionally trained and paid by Kitsap Transit to transport passengers as part-time, unionized drivers. Buses are 40-foot, GMC, over-the-road coaches with 49 reclining seats. Maintenance is handled through Kitsap Transit shops.
- ◆ Riders pay a flat fare of \$50.00 for a 40-ride punch ticket. Prior to recent fare increases (due to funding cuts), fares were based on the total round trip mileage of each coach (called a "Seat-Miles-Zone structure") which was generally cheaper than the new flat fare fee.
- ◆ A unique agreement with the US Navy allows active duty, retired, reserve and dependent members to participate in the Worker-Driver Bus Program for free. The Navy pays a fixed amount per year to the transit agency.

#### Stats

- ◆ This unique service boasts 22 bus routes. Twenty buses go to the Bremerton Naval Shipyard. One bus goes to the Naval Undersea Warfare Engineering Station at Keyport and one goes to a private company, K-2, on Vashon Island.
- ◆ In 1996, the Worker-Driver Bus Program racked up 450,096 total rides for the year. Recently, ridership has dropped off due to military cutbacks and fare increases. However, the program still averages close to 70,000 rides per month.
- ◆ In 1997 these huge "buspools" carried 9% of Kitsap Transit's commuter ridership.



Photo source: Kitsap Transit

## **What makes it successful?**

### **Convenience via 'buspool':**

- ◆ The Worker-Driver Bus Program responds to the needs of the riders by operating on more of a "buspool" concept than a traditional fixed route system. For instance, the driver and group collaborate on route and pick-up arrangements. And, the routes are so flexible that requests for re-routes into new developments can be accommodated within just a couple of weeks. The service markets itself through the convenience of being picked up and dropped off near both home and jobsite.
- ◆ Another convenience, which helps recruit and retain drivers, is that the worker-drivers may park coaches over night in a variety of convenient locations, including drivers' homes, the Kitsap Transit base locations, leased lots and even church parking lots.
- ◆ Costs are kept low for the program by purchasing and refurbishing old buses and eliminating dead-heading on the worker-driver routes.

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Information and statistics obtained from with Kitsap Transit's Supervisor of the Worker-Driver Bus Program, Judy Parks, July 2000.

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